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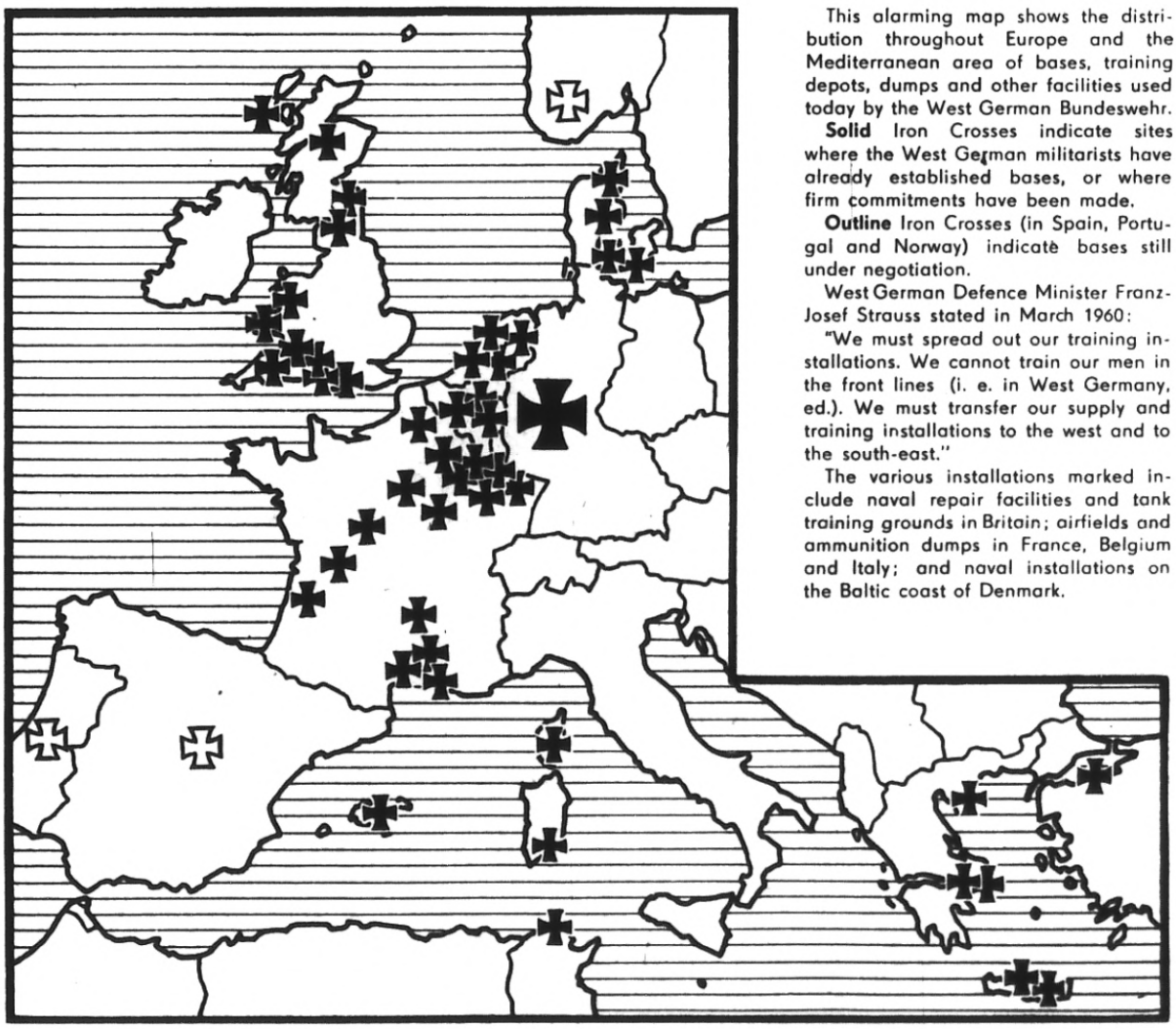
Iron Crosses Over Europe

Bundeswehr Bases, Depots and Dumps Scar Europe from Crete to Castlemartin



This alarming map shows the distribution throughout Europe and the Mediterranean area of bases, training depots, dumps and other facilities used today by the West German Bundeswehr.

Solid Iron Crosses indicate sites where the West German militarists have already established bases, or where firm commitments have been made.

Outline Iron Crosses (in Spain, Portugal and Norway) indicate bases still under negotiation.

West German Defence Minister Franz-Josef Strauss stated in March 1960:

"We must spread out our training installations. We cannot train our men in the front lines (i. e. in West Germany, ed.). We must transfer our supply and training installations to the west and to the south-east."

The various installations marked include naval repair facilities and tank training grounds in Britain; airfields and ammunition dumps in France, Belgium and Italy; and naval installations on the Baltic coast of Denmark.

Cold Weather Makes Trouble

A combination of bad weather and other problems caused temporary shortages in some foodstuffs in May and June in the GDR. The bad potato harvest which hit many parts of Europe last year meant a cut in the numbers of hogs and poultry, and then one of the coldest May months in the century held up the growth of fodder crops, causing difficulties for milk-producers as well. Government sources stated that farm cooperatives had managed to plant all potato fields despite these difficulties; they also asked all farmers to do what they could to increase their stocks of hogs and especially poultry and thus help overcome present shortages. Main hopes centred on the weather, which had turned warmer by mid-June.

National Congress Meets

A National Congress, called by the National Front of Democratic Germany to debate basic problems of Germany's future development, was still in session when GERMAN REPORT went to press. A full report of the Congress will be in our next issue.

Justice for Oradour

A nine-man French delegation from Oradour and a neighbouring village arrived in Dusseldorf in early June to demand the extradition of SS-General Heinz Lammerding, who ordered the destruction of Oradour and the burning or shooting of its 642 inhabitants on June 10th 1944. Lammerding, who was sentenced to death in absentia by a Bordeaux court in 1951, has never been bothered by the West German authorities and now has an important job in a Dusseldorf business firm.

The French delegation, which represented the "Committee for the Extradition of Lammerding", included the two survivors of Oradour and the man who first discovered the massacre. They said "We have no feelings of vengeance and want reconciliation between our neighbour countries, but we demand that justice be done."

West German police confiscated a tape recording of the press conference held by the French delegation before its departure from Dusseldorf.

20 Years Since Lidice

. . . in the GDR

"The People's Chamber of the GDR and all peace-loving Germans recall with solemn reverence the victims of Lidice," said a declaration of the People's Chamber on June 10th, the twentieth anniversary of the murder of all male inhabitants of the little Czech village and the deportation of its women and children to concentration camps.

"The People's Chamber pledges solemnly to do everything to fulfil the German people's historic mission of preventing war from ever again starting from German territory. This humanistic goal is the basic principle of all GDR policies."

A large delegation of GDR citizens joined with 70,000 Czechoslovaks and people of 30 other countries in visiting Lidice for the memorial ceremonies.

Articles in the GDR press retold the story of Lidice and also of Oradour-sur-Glâne in France and Distomon in Greece, which were also destroyed by the nazis exactly two years after Lidice.

. . . in West Germany

On the same day that ceremonies in Czechoslovakia commemorated the destruction of Lidice 20 years before, 400,000 Germans from the former "Sudetenland" areas of Czechoslovakia came from all parts of West Germany to a huge rally in Frankfurt/Main to demand return of the Czech areas which had once been grabbed by Hitler at Munich in 1938. The rally, which lasted three days, featured speeches by West German Cabinet Ministers Merkatz and Hans-Christian Seebohm, who is official spokesman of the Sudeten organisation. In a keynote speech, Dr Franz Boehm, once a Nazi Party judge in occupied Czechoslovakia and now President of the Sudeten organisation, professed to be sorry about Lidice but asserted that the Sudeten Germans had suffered "100 Lidices" at the hands of the Czechs.

The "Sudeten" rally was only one of a large number of revanchist meetings held in West Germany in the Whitsuntide week. In Moenchengladbach a former SS officer told a meeting of SS veterans that "Our unity is sealed by the blood and made holy by the graves of our comrades". Minister Erich Schellhaus, Cabinet Minister in Lower Saxony and Chairman of the "Silesian Landsmannschaft", told a meeting in Munich that the Polish frontier was invalid and said, "We are here to proclaim: Silesia is German, Silesia belongs to Germany . . . We must not only hold ourselves ready, we must also prepare for X-Day, for which we all are hoping."

De Sica, Sofia Loren in East Berlin

Famed Italian actor and film director Vittorio de Sica spent four days in East Berlin in early June making location shots for his new film, based on Sartre's play "The Prisoner of Altona". He was filming in the Berliner Ensemble, the outstanding East Berlin theatre founded by Bertolt Brecht, and the scenes shot included short scenes in which Sophia Loren, Oscar-winner of 1962, appeared on the stage of the Brecht theatre.

The GDR film company DEFA provided technical staff to help in the location shooting, and De Sica commented that cooperation between the Brecht theatre, DEFA, and his film unit was "outstandingly good".

During the visit, De Sica and Sophia Loren watched performances of "The Threepenny Opera" and other Brecht plays in the Berliner Ensemble. Miss Loren commented: "The best theatre I have ever seen, anywhere, anytime."

West Berlin newspapers launched a massive smear campaign against the Italian film director and star for filming in East Berlin: the mass-circulation "Bildzeitung" headed one hate article with the massive headline "Shame, Sophia".

Vittorio de Sica declined to comment on the press campaign, but stated: "I wanted to put a scene from one of the Brecht plays which I admire so much into this new film, so I went to the theatre which performs them better than any other theatre in the world."

Hitler Salute in Courtroom

SS Officers in W. German Police

The current trial of members of an SS Action Group has again caused bitter comments in the few West German newspapers which speak up against using war criminals in top positions. (For details on the trial, see DGR of May 25th and June 8th.) We reprint below excerpts from one such article in "Die Zeit" of June 8th.

The spectators in Moabit Criminal Court could not believe their eyes. It was on the eighth day of the trial of "Dr. Alfred Filbert and others", six former members of Action Group No. 9, whom the prosecutor accuses of murdering 11,000 Lithuanian and Russian Jews. Among the first of the 120 witnesses who have been summoned was Georg Fleischmann. He, too, was a member of the murder outfit. He was asked to swear in before giving his testimony; the head judge told him to raise his hand for the swearing-in ceremony. And then it happened: Fleischmann threw his arm upwards, right to the regulation eye-level, as he had always done it in the past — in a regular "Hitler salute".

The spectators began to murmur, some giggled, others cleared their throats very loudly. Then finally the witness noticed his mistake. He corrected the position of his arm hastily and raised the proper three fingers: Georg Fleischmann, former Captain in the SS, today a detective officer in Ludwigshafen ...

At this point one may ask; what kind of officials do we have nowadays sitting behind the desks of our detective police offices? This same question arose in the minds of many people again a few days later when two other men stepped into the witness stand: Konrad Zimmer and Gustav Hein. They also belonged to Action Group No. 9, as detective commissioners. Of course, they told the court that at that time they had never heard of any shootings. But the judge did not grant their statements much credence; they were not sworn in before giving testimony, so that they would not themselves be involved in a trial. Zimmer and Hein are at present detective inspectors in the "Godesberg Security Group", the police group attached to the office of the Federal Procurator General (like an Attorney General, ed.), which is considered the protector of the freedom and liberty of our state and which is charged with shielding the Federal Republic from traitors and spies.

These are three of the many men whose names are now known to us. But they are also three of the hundreds whose record will never be disclosed, but with whom we must nevertheless reckon ...

Two years ago High Commissioner and one-time police major Johannes Pradel was arrested. Until 1960 he had been head of the Department "Police" attached to the Government President of Hanover's office. In the Third Reich, Pradel had been a divisional head in Heydrich's and Kaltenbrunner's Reich Security Main Office (Eichmann's organisation, ed.). When he applied for a new job in the provincial capital of Hanover after 1945, he was shown a document listed as P 501, which had turned up during the Nuremberg Trials. It was signed by Pradel. But he told his questioners glibly that he had signed the document, it was true, but he had not read it at the time. He was believed, hired, and soon promoted. Pradel became a close confidant of his Government President.

Then one day the researchers in Ludwigsburg (Main Office for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes, ed.) discovered new material which incriminated Pradel very seriously. Denial availed no longer; he was suspended and is currently awaiting trial. The Nuremberg document had already proved beyond doubt: Johannes Pradel was one of the inventors of the mobile gas-chamber. He had approved the construction report of the death vehicles which were used for the liquidation of Polish Jews starting in 1941. But this man remained undisturbed for years and actually climbed to a top position in a provincial government.

In February 1961, detective officer Georg Heuser was arrested in Koblenz. He had formerly been an SS Captain and — as the Ludwigsburg office discovered — the head of an execution squad in the central part of the eastern front. He is accused of having taken part in the mass execution of Jews. Heuser, who was not accused of anything during denazification proceedings after the war, was not just any police officer. He was head of the provincial detective service in Rhineland-Palatinate. A few days after his unexpected arrest, the province's Interior Minister claimed publicly that Heuser had done his job "perfectly" and that an investigating commission had not discovered "any actions which were against regulations". Then, when it was made known who the "able" and "blameless" detective chief Georg Heuser really was, his Koblenz colleagues sent a bouquet of flowers to him in his cell ...

The Ludwigsburg office discovered other things as well: in the detective police department of a large West German city, one after another member of a former SS Action Group collected again — everyone from the commander of the outfit to the group's driver. The documents of the Police Section of the Public Employees' Trade Union in North Rhine-Westfalia have proved that the chief, his deputy and four group leaders of the Cologne Criminal Police all had the rank of Major in the SS. In North Rhine-Westfalia alone, the Dusseldorf union group discovered, there are today twelve detective chiefs, three deputy chiefs and five group leaders in the province's detective police central office who also formerly held the rank of SS Major ...

Just recently the chief of the Security Police in Giessen, Hans Hoffmann, was sentenced to three and a half years in prison. In November 1939 in Poland he and his execution squad had shot at least 162 Jews. Almost every one of the forty witnesses who testified in this trial and who belonged to Hoffman's group is still serving today as a police officer...

That is only a small sampling of symptomatic examples. They show that these conditions are not restricted to any one of the West German provinces.

10 Minutes per Death

"What are the sentences like (in war criminal cases, ed.)? Most convicted men are given jail terms usually handed out to petty sneak thieves on their second offence. In the Ludwigsburg Nazi Investigation Office there is a bitter saying: for every person killed, ten minutes in jail.

"When a man like Dr Theodor Scheu gets only six years although on his own initiative and without orders he had 220 Jews killed in Lithuania "as a warning" and even took part in the massacre himself, then we must ask: why was the court so incomprehensibly lenient?"

"Braunschweiger Zeitung", June 8th.

HERE IS THE RECORD:

2 Years of GDR Peace Proposals

The GDR has made over 100 proposals for negotiations with West Germany since the two states were formed in 1949. Here are the most important proposals of the past two years alone for achieving peace in Germany and Central Europe. It should be stressed that they were not final, take-it-or-leave-it conditions, but only suggestions to serve as a basis for further negotiations.

Plan for a Neutral Germany

September 9th 1960: The GDR proposed a "Three Year Plan" for the neutralisation of both German states to the UN General Assembly. Here are the main points of the plan:

First Year: Both German states abjure the use of force against each other or other countries, agree on an arms stop and renounce nuclear weapons. A peace treaty should be concluded with both German states and West Berlin should become a demilitarised Free City.

Second Year: Both German states reduce armed forces by stages and abolish conscription. Foreign troops and foreign bases are removed from Germany.

Third Year: Both German states dissolve all armed forces and destroy all weapons. West Germany leaves NATO and the GDR leaves the Warsaw Pact, achieving military neutralisation of Germany.

Supervision of Disarmament: A commission chosen on a parity basis by both German parliaments, reinforced by representatives from trade unions, women's and youth organisations.

WEST GERMANY SAID "NO" *

Minimum Truce Plan

December 15th 1960: The GDR Government suggested a "minimum" truce plan between the two German states, pending progress in disarmament. Here are the main points:

1. West Germany and the GDR should conclude a 10-year truce, renouncing the use of force.

2. An arms standstill and ban on war propaganda.

3. Both states should urge a non-aggression pact between NATO and Warsaw Pact.

WEST GERMANY SAID "NO"

New German Peace Plan

July 7th 1961: The GDR proposed neutralisation, a peace treaty, and confederation. Here are the main points of the three-part plan:

1. Good Will Treaty

A German Peace Commission should work out a Good Will Treaty on relations between the two German states. This treaty, incorporating former proposals for an arms stop, a ban on nuclear weapons and a NATO-Warsaw non aggression pact, should also pledge non-intervention in the social system of the other German state and should increase trade, culture and sports contacts.

2. Peace Treaty

The same German Peace Commission should work out proposals for a German Peace Treaty confirming the present German frontier; banning war propaganda and nazi, militarist and revanchist groups; supporting entry into the UN; solving the West Berlin question; and guaranteeing full liberty to the development of a peaceful economy in Germany.

3. German Confederation

This peace treaty would provide the basis for a German confederation, finally leading to the reunification of a neutral, demilitarised Germany.

WEST GERMANY SAID "NO"

Programme for Coexistence

December 1st 1961: The GDR proposed the following minimum coexistence programme:

The two German states should

1. each respect the sovereignty of the other state within its own borders;

2. negotiate views on a peace treaty;

3. renounce A-weapons;

4. support NATO-Warsaw non-aggression pact and representation of both German states in UN;

5. negotiate on passenger traffic, trade, recognition of the other's passports abroad, and on plans for future confederation.

WEST GERMANY SAID "NO"

Renounce A-Weapons

March 13th 1962: The GDR proposed German nuclear disarmament to UN. The proposal was made in answer to a UN query to all states without A-weapons. Main points of the reply were:

1. The GDR is ready to renounce the purchase, production or stationing of all nuclear weapons on its territory or the attainment of any power of decision over such weapons — if West Germany does the same.

2. The GDR stands by its proposals for disarmament or limitations of armaments in both German states.

3. The GDR is ready to make immediate agreements on the creation of an atom-free zone in Europe including both German states.

WEST GERMANY SAID "NO"

Control and Inspection

March 26th 1962: The GDR submitted a plan for localised disarmament in Central Europe to the Geneva Disarmament Conference. Main new feature was a provision for inspection and control. The plan proposed:

1. An atom-free zone in Central Europe in which all nuclear weapons, weapon carriers and launching sites were banned, the area to be guaranteed against nuclear attack by the UN. It would consist of both German states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and possibly Scandinavia and Finland.

2. Both German states should agree on an arms stop and reduction of forces.

3. Control and inspection in both German states — in regard to both nuclear and conventional weapons — should be entrusted to a commission with equal NATO and Warsaw Pact representation, aided by German control committees of parliamentarians, trade unionists and others.

WEST GERMANY SAID "NO"

* *West Germany was not only saying "NO" to offers from a state whose existence it refuses to recognise. At the same time, it was calling for a stronger NATO, more and better weapons, especially missiles and nuclear weapons, was officially rejecting present European borders and throwing monkey-wrenches into every attempt by Britain, the USA or anyone else to work out an atom-free zone or any other measure to relax tension.*

A-Weapons or Troops – or Both?

Chancellor Adenauer must now decide "whether to fulfil demands of the Americans for an increase in size of the German armed forces or the demands of his Defence Minister Strauss for an increase in the long-range atomic weapon carriers of the Bundeswehr forces", according to a long article in the West German news-magazine "Spiegel" on June 13th.

The magazine, asserting that the United States now wishes to keep control of long-range A-weapons in its own hands, states that "the American Government and General Norstad, American Commander-in-Chief of NATO, told Bonn in early May to set up at least six additional army brigades."

Four of these brigades, with a strength of about 5000 each, should be stationed along the northern borders of the GDR, the magazine stated. "The other brigades should first be used to fill out the twelve divisions which the Bundeswehr plans to put at NATO disposal by the end of 1963, and later the number of German divisions should also be increased. Up to now nine German divisions have been put under NATO command, most recently when Minister Strauss handed one over at Oldenburg on May 20th." (Divisions "handed over" to NATO remain on West German territory and are still commanded solely by West German generals. The "hand-over" is purely formal, especially since many top NATO officers are West Germans, the ed.)

More Millions . . .

West Germany should raise its military budget from 16,000 million marks a year to 18,000 million marks, West German Defence Minister Franz-Josef Strauss told an audience at Kalamazoo College on June 9th during a tour of the United States. By next year, he said, he hopes that West Germany will be spending as much for armaments as Britain and France. Strauss said that the Bundeswehr has now reached a strength of 375,000 men; in reply to charges that ex-nazi generals commanded the Bundeswehr and held top posts in NATO, Strauss admitted that West German military leaders had fought for Hitler, but claimed that ex-nazi generals like Hans Speidel and Adolf Heusinger were now all "politically reliable".

Indoctrination Course in the West German Wehrmacht

". . . the German soldier may thus be described as a militarist converted to pacifism who is ready, from the deepest conviction, to fight in the front line."

(Picture and text: "Simplicissimus", West Germany)

"If the Americans win out, the new military directive of NATO . . . will make the Bundeswehr the main factor in the West's conventional deterrent forces," the "Spiegel" article continued.

"But Defence Minister Strauss has very different ideas: He wants a share in the West's nuclear deterrent force for the Federal Republic and he is therefore struggling bitterly to outfit the Bundeswehr with long-distance carrier-missiles. In order to ready the Luftwaffe for these future duties, he has given the Luftwaffe the Pershing battalions now being built by the Army (range of the Pershing rockets: 360 miles).

"The Defence Minister and his ambitions have now come up against a hindrance which will be difficult to surmount: the financial resources of the Federal Republic are not large enough to carry out both the build-up with conventional weapons demanded by the USA and the atomic build-up of the Bundeswehr which Strauss wants.

"According to estimates of the Finance and Defence Ministries, both together would raise the Bonn military budget from the current sum of 15,000 million marks a year to over 20,000 million marks a year. The Bundeswehr (including military administration) would then reach a peace-time strength of well over 700,000 men – more than were in the Hitler-Wehrmacht just before full mobilisation in 1939 . . .

"Although at the moment there is no possibility for Franz-Josef Strauss to obtain medium-range rockets like the Polaris from the Americans, he wants nevertheless to put away money from the defence budget so that he can buy such rockets when the opportunity presents itself or else to use for supporting France's atomic weapons programme.

"For the same reason, Strauss refuses all cuts in one of the most expensive armament programmes of the Bundeswehr, which has already been begun and which also serves the purposes of atomic warfare: the arming of the Bundeswehr with US F104 fighter planes. These planes cost over 5,000,000 marks apiece, and the Luftwaffe is supposed to get about 700 of them.

"The F104 (Starfighter) is indeed one of the best interception fighters in the world, but it was ordered by Strauss and Luftwaffe Inspector General Kammhuber as a multi-purpose plane. The two Bavarians at the head of the Bundeswehr want it basically to carry atomic weapons for a counter-blow."

In order to get money to build up the atomic strength of the Bundeswehr, the "Spiegel" states that Strauss may meet American demands for more divisions by cutting the size of the present divisions, but keeping the same over-all strength.

"Last week the Defence Minister travelled to the USA to try to get American Defence Secretary McNamara to alter the American demands."

. . . More Missiles

Defence Minister Franz-Josef Strauss announced after a visit to Cape Canaveral that West Germany was buying enough American "Pershing" missiles to outfit three new missile battalions with the atomic artillery weapons. The USA will receive 480,000,000 marks of sorely-needed West German currency in exchange.

On June 20th, the first West German squadron of American-built F 104 multi-purpose Starfighter planes was scheduled for a try-out near Cologne. This represented another huge purchase of American atomic-weapon carriers arranged by Franz-Josef Strauss.

Background Notes on 'COMECON'

by Bill Rogers

On June 6th and 7th a group of top political and economic leaders from eight socialist countries met in Moscow to discuss closer economic cooperation. Their meeting was held in the framework of the Council of Mutual Economic Aid, which is better known as Comecon. Since few newspapers have said much of the background of this organisation, it might be worth telling just a little about it, especially from the standpoint of the contributions which the German Democratic Republic has made.

The Comecon was founded in 1949, at a time when the Soviet Union and the new socialist countries of Europe had just barely managed to heal the worst of the war damage which had hit almost all of them so severely. They had by and large attained their pre-war economic level.

But this did not mean so very much. With a few exceptions, the socialist countries had formerly been extremely backward, underdeveloped countries, with little industry, few engineers, scientists or skilled workers and a series of other seemingly insurmountable problems.

The first necessity for the members of the Comecon was to stimulate trade among the member nations on a planned basis; spreading around whatever resources were available, like Rumanian oil, Hungarian bauxite or Polish coal, as well as possible to meet the import demands of the other countries. All were desperately trying to pull themselves up out of the dependent economies of the past and develop a strong basic industry — including metallurgy, engineering and power.

Gradually, the Comecon members outgrew this level of cooperation based largely on trade. They began a number of big industrial projects shared in by several countries at a time on a basis of mutual advantage. These have included a big project for turning the huge reed swamps in the Danube delta of Rumania into much-needed paper and cardboard — a project which includes the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Poland as well as Rumania itself.

Another even more spectacular project is the huge petroleum pipeline — longest in the world when completed — which will supply Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and the GDR with petroleum from the rich Soviet deposits near the Volga.

Another aspect of the cooperation arranged for by Comecon is scientific research. In 1960, for example, members of 735 different research groups and institutes from the socialist countries cooperated in working out the solution to over 3500 theoretical and technical problems of a scientific nature. One of the most important centres of scientific cooperation is at Dubna in the Soviet Union, where experts from the Comecon countries work together on questions of harnessing atomic energy as well as on basic questions of atomic physics, utilising the pooled talents and resources of all the members.

But an economic organisation of socialist countries requires even closer coordination than in either of these two spheres alone. It also means balancing the production programme of one country with that of all the others. For example, why should all of the socialist countries make potato harvesters — requiring an investment of many millions — when one or two of the countries can specialise in making them and supply all the others. In most cases the country designated to specialise has already the experience and know-how as well as installations ready at hand and need only expand them to supply all needs. This not only saves the other countries the expense of building unnecessary factories, but also permits cheaper products in the long run, since products turned out in large quantities can of course be produced much more cheaply, and with a higher level of automation and scientific research.

This has already meant quite a few changes in the economies of the countries involved. Hungary is the recognised expert in making certain types of buses (with an Ikarus trade mark); other countries like the GDR have not bothered to make this type of large bus; Rumania and the Soviet Union are the recognised specialists in oil-drilling equipment, and both the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia will probably remain the only countries producing larger cars, with the GDR and Poland sticking to the production of smaller models. The same was true of aircraft — except for some smaller models, aircraft production has now been left to the Soviet Union.

The German Democratic Republic makes a very large contribution in this huge "division of labour". Its production amounts to 8 % of the total of all Comecon members, but it is especially strong in the engineering field — machine tools, huge drop-hammers and transportation equipment. Machinery and factory equipment make up 55 % to 60 % of the GDR's total export. A large proportion of the new steel rolling mills, cement works, and power plants of the other socialist countries come from the GDR; cranes, sea-going vessels, refrigerator waggons are other items which often come from the GDR. The GDR provides a large part of the industrial equipment for the new plant for making paper out of reeds in the Danube delta; it is outfitting two huge open strip lignite mines at Turow and Konin in Poland, as well as a big new textile plant in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, and it is making a large proportion of the pumping equipment for the huge "Friendship" pipeline mentioned above. In return, of course, it will receive paper, coal, oil and other products resulting from the new projects, but also other products produced in these countries — like the fresh fruits and vegetables which Hungary, Rumania, and especially Bulgaria are sending more and more to their more northerly neighbours.

This kind of coordination is by no means simple — in many ways it cuts across old habits and tendencies which are still quite strong. Yet its advantages are obvious, and more and more, the Comecon countries have gone over to long-term planning on a mutual basis. Comecon has a large number of specialised committees — ranging from metallurgy and building construction to agriculture — which spell out these plans in greater detail, and which organise the exchange of patents, scientists, methods and plans for cooperation on a branch or factory level.

The new meeting of Comecon in early June is one more step along this path. The organisation will now have a top-level executive committee made up of Deputy Premiers — VIPs who can guarantee results — it will also set up a new standardisation institute, which will study ways of standardising equipment so that parts and products made in one country can be used easily in other countries, and it will set up new permanent commissions for statistics and for coordinating scientific and technical research. There is still a great job of construction to be done in all the socialist countries — it will go easier and quicker if it can be done cooperatively.

Britain's True Friends in Germany

by Dr. Wolfgang Putlitz

(First Secretary in the German Embassy in London — 1934-1938)

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: *Wolfgang Putlitz is an unexpected sort of person to find living and working today in the GDR. Even his full name is unlikely — Wolfgang Gans Edler Herr zu Putlitz — a German feudal equivalent to the odd Irish title "The McGillycuddy of the Reeks". Putlitz, today 62, comes from one of the oldest Prussian Junker families: "We are 300 years senior to the Hohenzollerns in Brandenburg", he says with a smile. His early career coincided with his antecedents: officer in the Prussian Cavalry Guards, University (including one term at Oxford); a post in the German Foreign Office at the age of 25. When Hitler came to power, however, Putlitz began to worry about the road Germany was taking. A few of his other liberal colleagues resigned, others were sacked; Putlitz thought he could best help the international resistance to Hitler by staying at his post, first as First Secretary in the Nazi Embassy in London from 1934—1938 and later in Holland. Some of the vaguely anti-Hitler diplomats played at resistance, drawing up memoranda, and plotting desultorily with German generals who supported Hitler's conquests but regarded Hitler as an impossible plebeian who did not use his fork right. But Putlitz, during his whole career as a Nazi diplomat, was engaged in genuine and very dangerous resistance work, and at the outbreak of war, the British helped him to escape to London.*

After the war he received a senior post in the British Zone of West Germany, but he was soon sacked by his German superiors "because of his past". In 1952 he moved to the German Democratic Republic, where he has since worked to help build the first decent peaceable state in German history. He tells his full story in "The Putlitz Diary" published in London in 1957 by Allan Wingate Ltd.

I belong to the not inconsiderable number of German antifascists who pinned their hopes on England during the terrible years of the Third Reich, found a second home there and tried their best during World War Two to help the British forces achieve victory over the Nazi criminals.

We all thought at the time that after the defeat of the barbarous Hitler system there would be a final end to the fatal consorting and suicidal appeasement policy towards German militarism which we had witnessed with desperation right up to the catastrophe of 1939, and we were firmly convinced that England would help us to build up a new, trustworthy Germany which would guarantee it friendship and peace for all time.

I honestly shared these hopes at that time. As a member of the former German Embassy in London I had more than once risked my neck during the critical thirties, when Hitler was preparing for war, by warning the British Government of the secret plots of the brownshirted warmongers. And nobody questions the fact that during the war I remained unwaveringly true to the British cause right up to the very end.

It was not always easy, and I had also not expected the first post-war years to be easy. Nevertheless, I did look forward hopefully to the future when at last, on VE Day in May 1945, the Nazi rule of terror collapsed and I was able to stand in the midst of the cheering crowds in Piccadilly Circus, gay with flags and garlands. After the long night the road ahead seemed clear again and a purpose shone out on the horizon which would be a hundred times worth all the past efforts. It really looked as if the militarists and Nazis in Germany were now crushed forever and I prepared, full of hope, for the opportunity to help build up a better Germany together with my English friends and comrades-in-arms.

But this splendid dream was of short duration, unfortunately. Soon it became clear that it was not the German resistance fighters and antifascists who were regarded as the post-war representatives of my homeland, but opportunists and fellow-travellers of the Nazi regime, and even regular old Nazis, who were turning up in increasing numbers and being permitted to act as spokesmen for German affairs in London.

I did not wait for the moment when, as a man who had once been labelled an "enemy of the state" because of my pro-British attitude, I should perhaps have to undergo the humiliation of depending upon the benevolence of someone like Herr von Etzdorf (today West German Ambassador to London), who remained active right up to the very end of the war as representative of the German Foreign Office in war criminal Keitel's Supreme Command, and had in a routine-like manner passed on orders which meant death and disaster for thousands of Englishmen.

No, I could not and would not expose myself a second time to the disappointments of the Chamberlain and Munich era. Like a number of others, I moved to the German Democratic Republic, to that part of Germany where Nazism and militarism have been eradicated forever, from which no other country need fear a treacherous attack, and which has really been taking the road to a new Germany such as I had dreamed of in London in May 1945.

We former emigrants in England are painfully aware of the fact that many of our British friends, not understanding our real motives, regard us as faithless deserters and permit themselves to be confused once again by the false protestations of friendship which now issue as temptingly from Bonn as they did from Berlin in Hitler's day.

We German anti-fascists know our Nazis and militarists, their deceitful cunning and their brutal lust for power. Nothing can deceive us any more. We are not betraying the cause which once united us with our British friends when we continue to fight determinedly and uncompromisingly until the last traces of predatory Germany nationalism with its insane lust for power are finally wiped out. For in the final analysis, the conditions for peace and well-being for the British people, too, can only be permanently assured if we win this struggle.

England will not find her true friends in Bonn. They are here in the German Democratic Republic.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

When, in a normal civilised country, somebody accuses another of committing murder, it is the usual practice for the police and the courts to investigate the charge, and if they find it substantiated, to arrest and try the alleged murderer. If the murderer is allowed to go free, but the accuser is arrested, then it seems to be a fair assumption that there is something very wrong with the state concerned.

Something of this sort is going on at present in West Germany. On April 27th, GERMAN REPORT disclosed that two SS officials who had helped to murder Ernst Thaelmann, German Communist leader, in Buchenwald Concentration camp on August 18th 1944, had finally been identified. They were SS Staff Sergeant Wolfgang Otto, today a teacher in the town of Geldern, West Germany, and SS Corporal Alfred Berger, today a bank clerk, in Rottweil, West Germany.

Charges against the two men were filed with the courts by the West German Association of Nazi Persecutees. Nothing at all happened for several weeks; SS Sergeant Otto went on teaching the innocent children of Geldern, and SS Corporal Berger continued to tot up the bank accounts of the more prosperous inhabitants of Rottweil.

Then, finally, at the end of May, the courts and the police of West Germany swung into action in their full ineffable majesty. The court of Osnabrueck opened proceedings: but not against the murderers. The court announced that proceedings had been started against Ludwig Landwehr, former concentration camp inmate who had tracked down the two SS men, on charges that he was "continuing illegally the activities of the Communist Party of Germany", which is banned in West Germany.

The police were active too at the end of May. They rushed out busily and arrested two men: not the murderers, of course, but two GDR newsreel cameramen who had tried to take pictures of SS Sergeant Otto at the girls' school where he teaches in the little town of Geldern.

A few days later the police sirens howled again, and squad cars sped out to arrest a camera team from West German TV.

Readers in Canada will be interested and shocked to hear that SS Sergeant Otto was also responsible for the murder of three unidentified Canadian pilots in Buchenwald Concentration Camp. An old worker of Erfurt, Kondra Friedrich, who was a prisoner in Buchenwald Camp, has testified that in 1944 the three Canadian pilots were brought to the concentration camp, possibly after making an escape from a POW camp and being recaptured. SS Sergeant Otto, who was a member of the execution squad in the camp, was given the job of "extracting a confession" from them. The witness saw how Otto fixed nooses round the necks of the Canadian POWs in such a manner that they would strangle themselves if they moved from a position of rigid attention.

The witness could not see what happened subsequently, but several days later heard a report that two of the tortured Canadians had "committed suicide". He himself saw Otto take the surviving Canadian to the shooting range in the camp: the Canadian was never seen again.

But of course Wolfgang Otto is today a very suitable person to teach in a West German girl's school.

Just incidentally, SS man Otto did not get his job as a school-teacher by concealing his murderous past. An American court sentenced him to a long term of imprisonment in 1947 for his part in murdering foreign prisoners in Buchenwald; he was amnestied and released in 1952, and promptly went out into the world and got the job of teacher.

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I am sorry to have to report that the West German authorities are not the only people who regard war criminals as fine upstanding specimens of humanity. There are some active US officers who feel the same way about them. Take the following instance: the well-known American columnist Drew Pearson recently made some uncomplimentary remarks about General Friedrich Foertsch, nazi commander on the Leningrad front who was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment as a war criminal by a Soviet Court. Drew Pearson's column was printed in the Dayton "Daily News", and a day or two later this newspaper printed the following letter from Colonel S. D. Kelsey of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base:

"On the NATO military staff at SHAPE for three years, I had the honour to work with and know Gen. Foertsch, at that time Gen. Norstad's deputy chief for plans and policy. In brief, Gen. Foertsch is one of the sharpest officers and finest men I have ever known ... His strong moral values and his innate humaneness prevent one from accepting the implications of the columnist that he was a war criminal. Rather, Gen. Foertsch is the embodiment of the best of old Germany, the strong and warm Christian values of the west country of his birth married to the effectiveness and intelligence of the Prussian school ... If we should have a war, I'd sleep better knowing he was there ... Let us thank the good Lord that the chief military man in Germany is first of all a man of moral wholesomeness and strength, secondly a topnotch soldier who knows three years of combat against the Russians ... and thirdly a man of vision."

(Full details of what Foertsch really did may be found in GERMAN REPORT of March 3rd 1961. Among other things, his troops killed and deported thousands of civilians and razed countless towns and villages.)

Personal friends of Jack-the-Ripper are reported to have said that he was a wholesome man of sterling worth who liked to pat the heads of little schoolchildren.

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Owing to a regrettable oversight, the source of the caricature of Chancellor Adenauer on the front page of our last issue was not given. The caricature came from the pages of "Private Eye", a remarkable and sometimes very funny fortnightly lampoon published in London.

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In response to absolutely no popular demand one way or the other, we have decided to suspend for the time being the occasional column "Looking Backwards", in which we drew attention to notable facts about German history ten, twenty, thirty and forty years ago. We quite liked doing the column, but since no reader has ever commented on it, either favourably or unfavourably, we had better let it die an early death, particularly since its compilation took about as much time as getting out all the rest of the paper. To be quite honest, the actual work of compilation was not so terribly hard, but when we pulled out the old newspaper files and reference books, we found ourselves browsing off in all directions, looking up what the cinemas were playing in 1922 and reading the nature notes for 1932, and we just haven't got the time.

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